

CTV-06-1 Comment 5

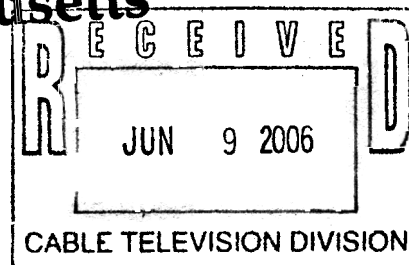
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City of Methuen, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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Stephen N. Zanni
Chairman

June 1, 2006

Andrea Nixon, Clerk
Cable Television Division
Department of Telecommunications and Energy
One South Station
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Ms. Nixon:

The City of Methuen would like to register its strong opposition to Verizon's March 16, 2006 rule making petition filed with the Cable Division of the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. Verizon's petition proposes extremely unreasonable new rules for initial cable licensing.

The proposed rules would require a municipality to hold a public hearing on an initial cable television license application within 60 days of the application filing, and would require only 30 days from the time of the public hearing for the municipality to approve or disapprove the application, and issue the actual license in case of approval.

As most local officials will tell you, it is impossible to conclude a proper initial license application review, negotiation, license drafting and issuance within 30 days of the public hearing. Such an initial licensing time frame would be untenable in the best of circumstances, and is particularly untenable now in light of many questions of first impression and complex issues raised by the nonstandard terms and conditions commonly reported to be included in Verizon proposed cable licenses.

As you know RCN initial licensing experience cable operators, willing to negotiate customary and standard cable licenses, enjoy reasonable and fast municipal licensing. The existing license timetables have worked well for decades. They should not be changed at the behest of a single proponent. Note that Congress contemplated and provided for a three-year renewal process when it more comprehensively and carefully set forth a cable-licensing rule in the 1984 Cable Act. This framework worked well for decades and there is no rational basis for casting aside the time tested licensing and replacing them with radically abbreviated licensing rules.

John A. Cronin, Jr.
Central District

Larry F. Giordano
East District

Kathleen Corey Rahme
At Large

Robert A. Andrew
West District

Philip J. Lahey, Jr.
Central District

Joseph A. Leone III
East District

Kenneth R. Willette, Jr.
At Large

Deborah R. Quinn
West District

Municipal officials who are responsible for implementing licensing and who are accountable to the public are in opposition to these proposed rules. Municipal officials are concerned that, under the proposed rules, our community and cities and towns across the state will be boxed in to an untenable 30 days post hearing licensing process and would lose the ability to properly review and negotiate Verizon cable proposals. This is not even close to what is reasonably needed for a fair and reasonable licensing process. The Massachusetts cable division should reject the Verizon petition and allow local officials to continue serving their constituents as they have been doing for decades.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any further questions or desire further comment, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Stephen N. Zanni
Council Chairman



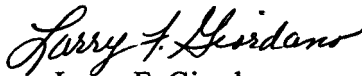
Kathleen Corey Rahme
Vice-Chairman



Robert A. Andrew
West District Councilor



Joseph Leone
East District Councilor



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